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Experiences in collecting and using gender indicators for policymaking

Thematic area about gender equality – indicators used for monitoring the goal for gender equality

Note by the Statistics Sweden*

Summary

To follow up gender equality policies and the set objective, Statistics Sweden was assigned by the Government to produce a proposal for indicators of results linked to the goal for gender equality. The 88 indicators are available on Statistics Sweden's website via a portal. The Government Offices have chosen 26 indicators that are to be followed up each year in the budget proposition. Other indicators are used as a complement.

I. Background

1. Labour market policy was the first area to be touched upon, but later gender equality policy spread to areas such as education, social insurance, democracy and family policy. It was not until the 1990s that men's violence against women became one of the central issues for gender equality, as it is today. Now nearly all areas of politics are affected by gender equality policy. In the beginning of the 1970s it became a policy area of its own.

2. The requirement for statistics about women and men increased and Statistics Sweden has published statistics on women and men in many areas that are pedagogical and

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easy to access. The booklet "Women and men in Sweden" was published for the first time in 1984 and was a huge success, leading to visibility of inequalities. Today the booklet is published every other year in Swedish and English.

3. In the beginning of the 1990s it was decided that all official statistics based on individuals were to be broken down by sex. This was also written in the ordinance for the official statistics. On behalf of the Government of Sweden, Statistics Sweden has been assigned to follow up the compliance to this section in the ordinance of the official statistics. Statistics broken down by sex implies that all information is to be presented by sex in all combinations of variables, that is, sex should be the overall basis for classification. Every other year Statistics Sweden provides feedback to a selection of government agencies that produce official statistics based on individuals.

4. The easy-to-read booklet about women and men together with the requirements for statistics broken down by sex became important issues that were taken up in the Platform for Action that was created after the fourth women's conference in Beijing.

II. Swedish gender equality policy

5. Since the middle of the 2000s, gender mainstreaming has been the strategy that the Government Offices uses to direct the work for gender equality.

At about the same time the Parliament decided on a new overall goal for gender equality: "Women and men must have equal power to shape society and their own lives". This implies among other things the following sub-goals:

- An equal distribution of power and influence
- Economic equality between women and men
- Equal distribution of unpaid care and household work.
- Men's violence against women must stop

6. The need for follow-up occurred when it was difficult to assess if the measures of the gender equality policies had any effect. The Parliament criticised the follow-up of results by the Government on several occasions and wanted to see an improved and in depth follow-up and evaluation of gender equality policies.

III. Portal

7. To follow up gender equality policies and the set objective, Statistics Sweden was assigned by the government to produce a proposal for indicators of results. These indicators are linked to the four sub-goals. Together with the statistics within three in-depth areas, the indicators are available on Statistics Sweden's website via a so-called portal. The three in-depth areas are employment, entrepreneurship and education. The information is updated every year on two occasions in order to be as current as possible. The portal also includes tables in Excel format, one for each area, for users who want to do their own processing. All statistics that has been published is available on the website so it is possible to create time series. Since the need for statistics changes over time, the portal has the flexibility to allow changing or increasing the number of tables in the existing areas. In addition, it is possible to create new in-depth areas.

IV. Requirements for indicators

8. An indicator is a quantitative measure, usually a ratio. An indicator is not an absolute truth, and always needs to be interpreted and assessed based on a larger context. Statistics Sweden chose to present the indicators more than as ratios. The reason is that a ratio can be blunt and undifferentiated. The indicators thus consist of tables.

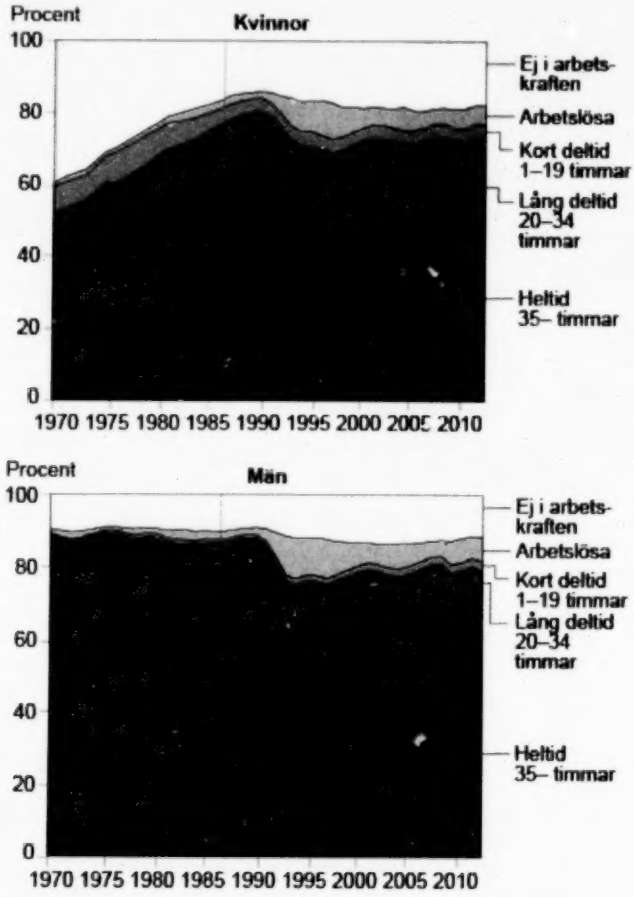
9. An indicator should fulfil a number of criteria to be able to be used for follow-up over a relatively long period of time. They should be simple, relevant, valid, able to be repeated, reliable and sensitive to changes. The indicators nearly always show information about women/girls and men/boys respectively. They can be numbers, percentages of a whole or sex distribution.

10. Of course, all indicators are presented disaggregated by sex, except within the fourth sub-goal: "Men's violence against women must stop". In this area several persons are involved, victims and perpetrators. The statistics are based on crime codes in the statistics on reported crimes, enabling the presentation to be made by the sex of the victim in most cases. Statistics on convictions are instead based on the legislation and presentation is made by the sex of the perpetrator.

11. The indicators come from several different sources. A safe source concerning the quality and availability of data is an important criteria for the choice of indicators. The official statistics are used to the greatest extent possible, as these also fulfil significant quality requirements. The indicators are not expected to provide answers to why the development appears in a certain way. By and large all indicators are results indicators that are used in the assessment of progress in relation to the set goals or guidelines. They are not absolute truths but should be seen as an indication that the goal has been reached or that development is underway towards or away from the goal.

12. In several cases, the tables in the portal are in line with the statistics that Statistics Sweden has produced over a long period for the publication "Women and men in Sweden", which can be regarded as safe indicators. For example, this time series from 1970 and forward.

Persons aged 20-64 by activity status and hours normally worked 1970-2012
Percentage distribution



Source: Labour Force Surveys (LFS), Statistics Sweden

V. A follow-up system for gender equality policy

13. Gender equality policy lacks a recurring and consistent follow-up based on indicators. This type of follow-up system would provide better conditions to take advantage of the results and experience based on the current policy.

The follow-up system mainly aims to follow up development on the national level. Follow-up is already being done on the regional and local levels, and a total follow-up system is under development. The follow-up aims to be strategic and predictable with respect to the aspects that are followed up. Indicators and the in-depth gender equality statistics in the thematic area that Statistics Sweden has built up are important parts of the follow-up system.

14. The Government Offices have chosen 26 of the 88 indicators. These are to be followed up each year in the budget proposition. Other indicators are used as a complement. In addition, there are a number of tables under the heading in-depth studies. These tables and the indicators besides the 26 main indicators will be used in more in-depth follow-ups.

A. Sub-goal 1: An equal distribution of power and influence

15. The first sub-goal states that women and men must have the same rights and opportunities to be active citizens and be able to form the terms for decision-making. Five indicators are selected to follow up this sub-goal:

- Compositions of the Parliament after elections 1921-20xx
- Chairpersons in municipal and county councils
- Boards and management in listed companies
- Managers in the private sector by type of manager
- Managers in the public sector by type of manager

16. An even representation of women and men is no guarantee that the real power will be equally distributed among the sexes, but it is a prerequisite. The goal aims at political rights as well as the power that lies outside of the democratic system of government. An example of this kind of power is the power that is exercised by enterprises. A government investigation from 2007 revealed that the sex distribution for leading positions varied in a systematic way among levels of society, professional areas and heads for various operations. Generally, visible positions that are affected by political measures have an even sex distribution, while the reverse applies to positions without public scrutiny, for which recruitment is done by informal choices with limited transparency. The central level often has a more even sex distribution than the regional and local levels. There are also differences between the areas such as politics on the one hand and the business sector on the other. Central government agencies often have a more even sex distribution than municipalities and privately run operations. In addition, there are also differences between different types of positions. Managing directors, executive directors and chairpersons are often men. Women in leading positions are often board members.

Compositions of Parliament after elections 1921-2010

B. Sub-goal 2: Economic equality between women and men

17. Women and men must have the same opportunities and conditions with regard to education and paid work that provide them with the means to achieve lifelong economic independence.

18. Ten indicators are selected to follow up this sub-goal:

- From income from employment and business to individual disposable income for persons aged 20 – 64
- Individual disposable income by type of household and number of children

- Days for which parental allowance paid 1974-20xx
- Women's wages as per cent of men's by sector, before and after weighting 1974-20xx
- Segregation index by age
- Employed persons aged 20 – 64 by age and degree of attachment to the labour market
- Persons aged 20-64 by age and hours normally worked as full-time and part-time
- Upper secondary school graduates by programme or attachment to programme
- Ongoing cases of sickness benefit days in December 1974-20xx
- Persons with sickness and activity compensation by age.

19. A key feature of Swedish gender equality policy is that women and men must have the same possibilities to support themselves through paid work. Women and men are individually responsible for both support and care. Taxes and social insurances are tied to the individual to allow women and men to be able to both work and take care of a family. The lack of gender equality does not mainly deal with access to education and the labour market, but rather the differences in basic conditions, possibilities and terms concerning education and paid work.

Days for which parental allowance paid 1974–2011

Number of days in 1 000s and proportion (%) drawn by women and men

Year	Allowance			Temporary allowance		
	Number	Distribution by sex		Number	Distribution by sex	
		Women	Men		Women	Men
1974	19 017	100	0	689	60	40
1980	27 020	95	5	3 042	63	37
1985	33 193	94	6	4 156	67	33
1990	48 292	93	7	5 731	66	34
1995	47 026	90	10	4 890	68	32
2000	35 661	88	12	4 403	66	34
2005	42 659	80	20	4 421	64	36
2011	50 284	76	24	5 044	64	36

Source: Swedish Social Insurance Agency

C. Sub-goal 3: Equal distribution of unpaid care and household work

20. Women and men shall take the same responsibility for household work and have the same opportunities to give and receive care on equal terms. Four indicators are selected to follow up this sub-goal:

- Days for which parental allowance paid 1974-20xx (same table as sub-goal 2)
- Time use for persons aged 20-64
- Time spent on unpaid work for persons aged 20-64 by life cycle
- Reason for part-time work for persons aged 20-64.

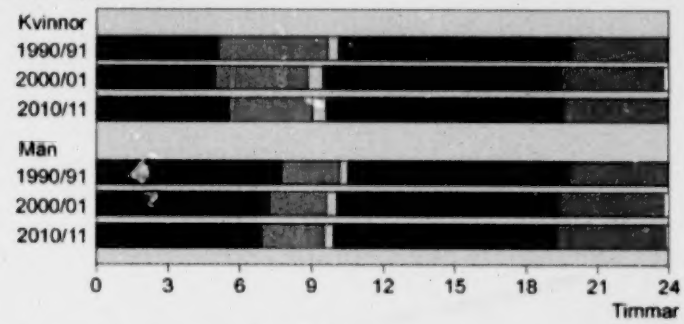
21. A cornerstone in Swedish welfare and gender equality policy is that people should not have to choose between having paid work and having a family. Parental allowance, child care and care of the elderly have had considerable significance for Sweden's labour force participation rate among women and a high fertility rate. Both women and men are

expected to take the same responsibility for unpaid work. The Time Use Survey gives a picture of everyday life of women and men. The survey has been conducted three times: 1990/91, 2000/2001 and 2010/11. We are now able to make comparisons about events over a 20 year period. The results concerning the distribution of unpaid work is closely related to sub-goal two, which means that the interventions in the policy areas that concern sub-goal two have considerable significance even for sub-goal three.

Time use for persons aged 20-64, 1990/91, 2000/01 and 2010/11

Hours and minutes

An average weekday



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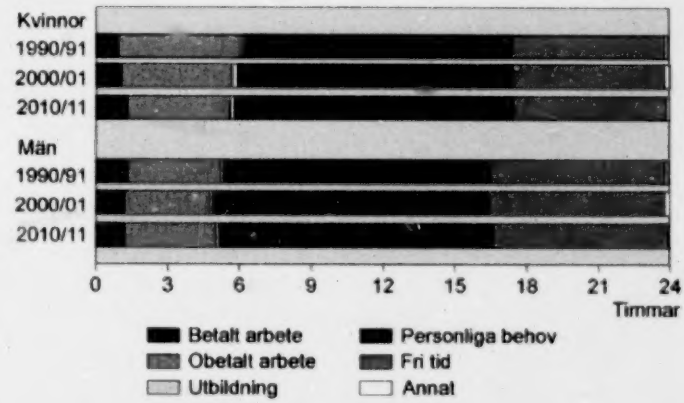


Källa: Tidsanvändningsundersökningen, SCB

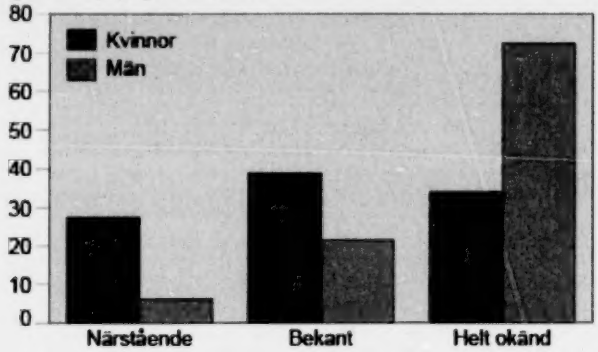
D. Sub-goal 4: Men's violence against women must stop

22. Women and men, girls and boys shall have equal rights and opportunities in terms of physical integrity. Seven indicators are selected to follow up this target:

- Persons aged 16-79 subjected to assault by place
- Persons aged 16-79 subjected to assault by relation to perpetrator
- Persons 16-79 year who have been subjected to sexual crimes by age
- Reported assaults
- Gross violation of a woman's integrity
- Reported rapes
- Persons found guilty by main crime.

23. In the United Nations' declaration about the abolition of violence against women, the violence that women are subjected to is described as the utmost consequence of men's dominance and women's subordination. Violence is an expression for the power structure that exists between women and men, as well as a means to maintain that power structure. To be spared from violence and abuse is a prerequisite for the enjoyment of human rights. The sub-goal includes all forms of physical, mental and sexual violence as well as threats of violence against women and girls. Included also are the efforts to combat prostitution and human trafficking for sexual purposes and honour-related violence. The concept of physical integrity means, among other things, the right and possibility to control one's own body, sexuality and reproduction.

Persons aged 16-79 subjected to assault by relationship to the perpetrator 2011
Proportion (%) of occurrences



Källa: Nationella trygghetsundersökningen (NTU), Brottsförebyggande rådet (BRÅ)